National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM), New England Region (NER)

Emergency Preparedness & Response Summit

University of Massachusetts Medical School

Worcester, MA

November 22, 2013

AGENDA

8:00 AM **Registration**

8:30 AM **Welcome and Introductions,** Meredith Solomon, Education and Outreach Coordinator, New England Region, NN/LM

8:45 AM **The NN/LM National Emergency Preparedness & Response Initiative,** Dan Wilson, Coordinator

9:15 AM **Disaster Resources from the National Library of Medicine,** Siobhan Champ-Blackwell, Disaster Information Management Research Center

10:00 AM **Panel of Emergency Planners,** Liz Foley (Medical Reserve Corps), Cindy Hahn (American Red Cross), and Chris Montiverdi (Worcester Emergency Management)

11:30 AM **Lunch**

1:00-4:00 PM **Afternoon Concurrent Workshops**

- **Disaster Health Information Sources: The Basics: Focus on Extreme Weather**, Siobhan Champ-Blackwell

- **Tools for Improving Library Readiness,** Dan Wilson

The New England Region of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine[1] hosted an Emergency Preparedness Summit which attracted 35 registrants from the New England area, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. Attendees included academic librarians, hospital librarians, public librarians, conservationists, emergency managers, and public health workers. The objectives of the meeting were to raise awareness about possible partnerships between libraries and community emergency managers in emergency preparedness and response, and to promote discussion, both during the meeting and following, about how such partnerships can be implemented.

Meredith Solomon, Education & Outreach Coordinator for the New England Region of NN/LM welcomed everyone at 8:30 AM, provided an overview of the day's activities, and introduced the morning's speakers.
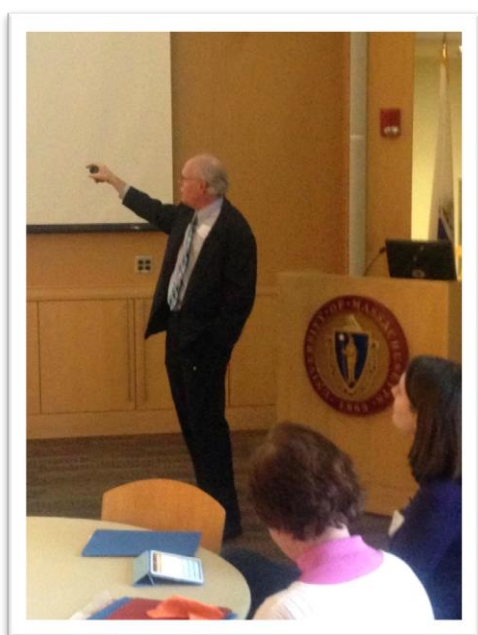
Dan Wilson instructs for NN/LM.
Photo by Meredith Solomon.

8:45 AM **The NN/LM National Emergency Preparedness & Response Initiative,** Dan Wilson, Coordinator

Dan provided a look back at how NN/LM became involved in emergency preparedness, citing the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 as the starting point. Between 2005 and 2013, NN/LM's National Emergency Preparedness & Response Initiative[2] has developed and implemented a response plan for health sciences libraries at the national level, developed a training curriculum for emergency preparedness and response, and has provided outreach to academic libraries, hospital libraries, special libraries, and public libraries. Its most recent outreach activity has been to facilitate partnerships between libraries and local emergency managers for emergency preparedness and response.

Dan further pointed why and how libraries and librarians are effective partners in emergency management, including that their locations are regarded as neutral spaces and that librarians are trained to assist the public and to organize and find information. Elements of being prepared for an emergency include having a disaster plan, the recommended one being the "One Page Plan"[3] tailored for libraries, being aware of risks and incidents in localities and regionally, and having communication information for stakeholders. The One Page Plan is based on the template, "PReP," or Pocket Response Plan, created by the Council of State Archivists (CoSA).[4] Businesses and libraries should also have a Service Continuity Plan in order to maintain their services to the public as much as is possible.

Dan recommended ways to maintain awareness, such as emergency alert systems and radios, and opportunities for volunteering in emergency-management organizations such as the

Medical Reserve Corps,[5] the American Red Cross,[6] Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT),[7] and Virtual Operations Support Teams (VOST).[8]

Dan Wilson, meeting participants, morning session.
Photo by Meredith Solomon.

Siobhan Champ-Blackwell instructs for DIMRC.
Photo by Meredith Solomon.

9:15 AM Disaster Resources from the National Library of Medicine, Siobhan Champ-Blackwell, Disaster Information Management Research Center

Siobhan provided information on the Disaster Information Management Research Center (DIMRC),[9] a unit of Specialized Information Services of the National Library of Medicine.[10] The mission of DIMRC is "to develop and provide access to health information resources and technology for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery," and its focus is on providing pertinent information to hospitals/first receivers and first responders nationwide. They work with librarians and libraries as gateways and for training in the products made available by NLM. DIMRC supports preparedness efforts for libraries and librarians so that they will be available to help in response when needed, and they gather and organize grey literature related to disaster information. DIMRC also facilitates the

Emergency Access Initiative,[11] NLM's platform for providing free full-text journal articles to health care providers and first responders working at declared disaster sites.

Siobhan gave an overview of products NLM has made available for first responders:
- WISER (Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders)[12]
- CHEMM (Chemical Hazards Emergency Medical Management)[13]
- REMM (Radiation Emergency Medical Management)[14]
- Mobile connections/apps to resources[15]

The Stafford Act[16] now includes libraries as "essential" services in communities, making them eligible for FEMA assistance during emergencies, specifically that libraries may receive funding and assistance to relocate after a disaster in order to continue to serve their communities. This has brought libraries, public libraries in particular, closer to the forefront of community emergency management planning.

Siobhan also noted the Disaster Information Specialist program[17] and the opportunity for certification, the Disaster Outreach listserv,[18] Disaster Health Information Outreach and Collaboration projects[19] in various parts of the U. S., and the Center's presence on social media (see the DIMRC web site). All of these activities help DIMRC to achieve its goal of delivering "just what I need" information, "just in time."

Dan Wilson, Meredith Solomon, Siobhan Champ-Blackwell. Photo by Michele Eberle.

Group Activity: Dan Wilson asked meeting participants to divide themselves into six groups by tables. Their assignment was to discuss roles libraries and librarians could play in emergency response.

Reports from groups:

- emergency planners like the idea of using libraries as command centers
- librarians would like to get information from the emergency planners, suggest they could provide child-care services (story times, etc.), and could also help document lessons learned after an event
- libraries could also be used as communication centers because of internet connections, could also be used as "charging centers" for electronic devices

- libraries could be used as cooling centers; both parties encouraged connections
- libraries are seen as safe places, providing internet, warming/cooling, and neutral space
- libraries can be used as shelters or as staging areas for response activities
- libraries can be communications hubs, training sites, possibly assist with funding opportunities, and could be a component of collaboration in emergency planning
- libraries could be cooling centers if power is still available
- should promote the use of emergency management apps
- host a "family emergency day" at the library
- librarians could assist in providing information prior to an event, help process reports afterwards, and help inform the literature following an event
- providing human contact is a valuable service libraries and librarians can provide
- would help for librarians to be aware of the needs of emergency personnel, e. g. have extra copies of the PDR or other standard texts available to distribute throughout the community by emergency responders

Panel of Emergency Planners: Liz Foley (Medical Reserve Corps), Cindy Hahn (American Red Cross), and Chris Montiverdi (Worcester Emergency Management)

Dan Wilson moderated a panel discussion whose focus was discovering how libraries can best assist in emergency management.

Question 1: Have any of the panelists incorporated libraries into emergency preparedness or response?
All three panelists said their organizations had used library spaces for training, and the emergency managers have used them as cooling spaces. They agreed that there are more opportunities for collaborating, and that internet access would be especially valuable during and after an emergency.

Question 2: Would partnering for functions such as providing charging stations work with local emergency management?
This would require some pre-planning; buildings need to be fitted ahead of time to accommodate generator power. Public health and hospital preparedness programs are experiencing reduced funding, but some funding may be available via state and federal programs.

Dan Wilson and Emergency Planners Panel. Photo by Susan Yowell.

Question 3: Where does information come from in a disaster?
- the American Red Cross website, apps for alerts
- the library has become the information center for services available in some communities
- FEMA and state emergency agencies
- the federal "lessons learned" website; after-action reports, lots of information to inform planning for similar scenarios
- the ready.gov website
- situational reports, calls from FEMA for specific emergencies
- Ping4 alert app

Question 4: Do the agencies represented use social media?
All three organizations represented use Facebook and Twitter. The American Red Cross has staff who monitor posts about the agency to maintain the accuracy of the content.

Question 5: What emergency alerts are available?
Emergency management reported that local alerts are in place; the quality of information delivered is sometimes dependent upon the limited length of messages. There are specific alerts for the power grid and for weather. They receive email alerts from online sites, and the Red Cross monitors these as well so they can contact local emergency managers to arrange for support services; they also gain some alert-type information from monitoring social media.

Question 6: Are there opportunities for volunteerism with these organizations?
- Siobhan noted that digital volunteerism (re American Red Cross) is a great place for librarians to collaborate because of their training in verifying and authenticating information.
- the Medical Reserve Corps needs both medical and non-medical volunteers and can make use of many different skill sets such as security and logistics. They provide free training, including CPR, and can team up with libraries. Orientation includes becoming familiar with the organization, development of core competencies, and personal preparedness. They also collaborate with other organizations such as the American Red Cross.

- the American Red Cross needs volunteers of many types—they are a 98% volunteer organization. Response to fires is one of their most common responses. Primary roles for volunteers are to arrange for shelter and interview to assess needs. They also provide training; their volunteer sign-up process begins online. Volunteers also assist with providing "feeding" services for first responders. The organization welcomes libraries to suggest services they can provide.
- the age minimum for these organizations is 18 years, unless it is a "junior" organization

Dan Wilson, Liz Foley, Chris Montiverdi, Cindy Hahn, Siobhan Champ-Blackwell.
Photo by Susan Yowell.

Meeting Summary

The National Library of Medicine provides resources and training for libraries and for hospitals and first responders in emergency preparedness and response, through the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) and through the Disaster Information Management Research Center (DIMRC).

The NN/LM initiative, "OPAL" (One Page/All Libraries), is focused on enabling every library to easily create and maintain a one-page disaster plan to facilitate emergency response. NN/LM is also promoting partnerships between libraries (both public and academic) and community emergency response agencies.

The DIMRC web site provides access to many resources including the tools, WISER, CHEMM, REMM and others. Many of these tools are available in app form in order to be used on many digital platforms. DIMRC also sponsors collaborative projects between hospitals and disaster information specialists as well as providing training via CE courses available through the Medical Library Association.

Libraries are well-positioned to play a role in emergency response within their communities because they are seen as neutral spaces, they have equipment and staff available with skills needed for use of information technology, librarians are familiar with gathering, authenticating and organizing information, libraries have space available for use by communities, and they are now designated "essential" community services following a disaster, and thereby available for support from FEMA in order to relocate and provide services.

In addition to their library-specific functions such as lending books and videos, library buildings can be used and librarians can assist in various other ways following a disaster. If power is available, they can provide internet access, both wired and wireless, serve as warming or cooling stations for community members and responders, host the command center for the local disaster response team, provide help with child care such as story times, find and help disseminate accurate information for the public, especially related to health, safety and availability of resources, and can provide assistance to patrons who need help finding displaced relatives or other assistance with web-based resources. Librarians can also use their training to assist with documenting events and preparing after-action or lessons-learned reports.

> *"Local Emergency Managers should be the primary contacts for incorporating libraries as response agencies into community preparedness and response activities. Emergency managers prefer to utilize existing sites over having to open additional shelters, and libraries could be part of this strategy. Even if a library does not have power, its parking lot could be used for trucks or trailers providing power or wireless internet access in a community."--Emergency Manager, New England Region*

Most community emergency managers have not been aware of the roles that libraries could play in emergency response within their communities, nor of the tools freely available from NLM by way of NN/LM and the DIMRC. The representatives at this meeting believed the emergency management/library partnership could be very effective. They recommend libraries contact their local emergency management departments to discuss ways libraries can be included as response agencies following a disaster.

Volunteer organizations, such as the American Red Cross and the Medical Reserve Corps offer many opportunities for librarians to become involved in emergency response, and they offer free training.

Acknowledgements

Referenced Materials

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[5] Medical Reserve Corps, Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps, https://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/HomePage, accessed December 10, 2013.

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[13] U. S. Department of Health & Human Services, CHEMM: Chemical Hazards Emergency Medical Management, http://chemm.nlm.nih.gov/, accessed December 10, 2013.

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[17] National Library of Medicine, Disaster Information Management Research Center, Disaster Information Specialist Program, http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/dimrc/disasterinfospecialist.html, accessed December 10, 2013.

[18] National Library of Medicine, Disaster Information Management Research Center, DISASTR-OUTREACH-LIB Listserv, http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/dimrc/dimrclistserv.html, accessed December 10, 2013.

[19] National Library of Medicine, Disaster Information Management Research Center, NLM Disaster Health Information Outreach and Collaboration Projects, http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/dimrc/disasterinfofunding.html, accessed December 10, 2013.